

months. As Zola tells us, during the years over which these dinners were spread, the choice of a restaurant for the next repast invariably led to great discussion among the five *convives*. Anxious apparently to sample every kind of *cuisine*, they went from the Cafe\* Eiche to Voisin's in the Bue St. Honore\*; from Voisin's to Adolphe and Pelt's near the Grand Opera House, and thence to the Byron on the Place de l'Ope'ra Comique. They feasted now on *bouillabaisse*, now on *poulet au Izari*. Tourgeneff naturally required caviar to whet his appetite; Plaubert always insisted on having Normandy butter, and revelled in Eouen ducklings & *I'Uouffade*; while Goncourt evinced a depraved taste for preserved ginger. As for Zola, he, according to Alphonse Daudet, was addicted to shellfish and sea-urchins | His friends occasionally twitted him respecting the partiality he began to evince for good fare, — which cast, they said, a lurid light on his novel, "Le Ventre de Paris" — and he frankly acknowledged his *gourmandise*, pleading, however, that it was his only vice, and that he had gone hungry so many years!

Of course there was no ceremony at those monthly dinners. Flaubert and Zola often took off their coats and sat down at table "in their shirt-sleeves," as the phrase goes, while

between the courses Tourgeneff would sprawl  
on a sofa.  
And directly the coffee was served the waiters  
were turned  
out of the room, and a long discussion on  
literary subjects  
began, that is when it had not been started  
already at the  
outset of the repast. " I remember," wrote Zola,  
in his recol-  
lections of Flaubert,<sup>1</sup> " a terrible discussion on  
Chateau-  
briand, which lasted from seven in the  
evening till one

<sup>1</sup> Zola's "Les Eomanciers Naturalistes," p. 181.